

## A LAND OF BLIZZARDS

THE FIERCE GALES THAT SWEEP AND WRECK SEISTAN.

These Terrible Windstorms Always Blow, as They Have Done For Ages, From the Same Direction—A Pandemonium of Noise, Sand and Dust.

Every one who has visited Seistan or written about Seistan has mentioned its celebrated wind, called the "bad-i-sad-o-bist roz," or wind of 120 days, which blows in the summer. Few of these have had the misfortune to experience it, but as we went through two seasons of this wind we are able to say something about it. It more than justifies its reputation. It sets in at the end of May or the middle of June and blows with appalling violence and with little or no cessation till about the end of September. It always blows from one direction, a little west of north, and reaches a velocity of more than seventy miles an hour. It creates a pandemonium of noise, sand and dust and for a time gets on one's nerves, but it is in reality a blessing in disguise, for it blows away the insects which from April to June make life in Seistan a perfect purgatory, mitigates the awful summer heat and clears the country of typhus, smallpox and other diseases rife in the country in May and June. One would think this 120 day wind enough, but violent winds prevail all through the winter from December to April, and blizzards are of constant occurrence. These winds always come from the same direction. The winter blizzards are terrible, and the wind attains a terrific velocity. In a blizzard at the end of March the anemometer registered a maximum of 120 miles an hour. The average velocity for a whole sixteen hours was more than eighty-eight miles an hour.

The extraordinary frequency and violence of the Seistan wind and the regularity with which it blows from the same quarter are very remarkable. That it has blown from the same quarter in past ages is proved by the fact that all the ruins of Seistan are built at the same angle, with their front and back walls at a right angle to the wind and their side walls at the same angle as the wind. No wind can blow with such violence and frequency without leaving its mark on the country. Its effects are everywhere visible in Seistan. Everything looks wind swept and wind stricken. Over the greater part of the country not a single tree exists.

The present villages and habitations are all built with their backs presenting lines of dead walls on the windward side. The old ruins are oriented at exactly the same angle on account of the wind. The effect of wind is everywhere visible on these ruins. Their bases are undercut by wind as though by water action. The thickness of the walls, the excellent quality of the burned bricks made and used by the ancient inhabitants for the lower courses of their buildings and the extreme hardness and durability of the Seistan brick when made into the sun dried bricks of which the upper portions of the ruins are composed, have withstood the destructive effect of the wind in a wonderful manner, but in the older ruins we often find that the walls facing the wind have entirely disappeared, and only the side walls remain, while in still older ruins only one or two solitary pinnacles remain to mark what were once large, massive and extensive buildings.

The wind has buried large tracts of the country under sand. Many of the old ruined towns are wholly or partly buried in sand, and this burying process goes on all the year and every year and is covering up not only valuable lands, but inhabited villages. In Seistan, as elsewhere, the invading army of sand is preceded by lines of skirmishers in the form of traveling "burkhans," horseshoe shaped sand hills, which steadily advance until they meet some obstacle which retards them until the reserves come up to their support and bury all before them under hills of sand.

On our arrival in Seistan we found Kilaikona, a big and flourishing village, built on the south side of a high ridge for protection from the wind. Before we left the sand had attacked that ridge, surmounted it and buried the village, forcing the inhabitants to build a new village elsewhere. An example of still greater rapidity was afforded at the village of Kilaikona. Up to June, 1904, this village had a large, deep pond on its northern side. By September—that is, less than three months—this deep pond was converted into a sand hill some ten feet high.

The wind, however, did not confine its energy to burying only. While it covers some tracts deep in sand, it also sweeps other tracts clear of sand, rendering valuable land available for cultivation and exposing long buried ruins once more to view. These are, however, only the milder effects of wind action. The Seistan wind in its more destructive moods has in places removed not only sand, but places to place, but has scoured away the whole face of the country. Everywhere we find the sides and banks of the canals which irrigated the lands on which the dwellers of the old ruins depended left standing like walls high above the present surface of the surrounding land. These banks, having been hardened by water, have withstood the action of the wind better than the surface of the land, which has all been blown away to a depth of several feet. This depth in places is very considerable, and we find the outlines exposed of still older canals which existed at some yet earlier age and which must have been buried deep in the ground when the canals above them old as they are, were in use.—Geographical Journal.

The idle always have half a mind to do something.

## PLANT RETARDATION.

The Method of Producing Flowers Out of Season.

Lilies of the valley and many other plants are now placed on the markets of the world's great cities months after they are out of season. This is accomplished by "plant retardation," holding back the development by means of cold and darkness until whatever time is desired. Then they are once more subjected to light and warmth, when they blossom. The most prominent feature of a plant retardation establishment is the huge cold storage building in which the plants are stowed away. Under the care of the guide the visitor passes the portals. In a moment he steps from the warmth and light of a summer's day into the cold bitterness of a winter's night, the darkness of which is but feebly relieved by the flickering hand lanterns. The interior of the building is divided into various chambers, and each one of these is allotted to some particular kind of plant. One chamber is full of lily of the valley roots, the next is packed with boxes containing lily bulbs, while again a compartment is crammed with small potted plants of azalea and spiraea.

Each and all of these varieties are in a dormant condition, sleeping away their time entirely unconscious of the changing seasons in the outside world. The walls of the chambers are thickly coated with a deposit of frost crystals, and millions of these flash like diamonds in response to the rays of light from the lamp. The degree of cold is usually obtained by means of a compressed air apparatus, and the freezing current is led into the different chambers through wooden channels.

In course of time these passages get choked with hoarfrost, and it becomes necessary for a man to enter them and clean the accumulation away. This is a cold job. In places the temperature is as low as 20 degrees below zero. The costume of a workman engaged in this clearing out operation is practically an arctic outfit. Every part of the body with the exception of small holes for eyes and mouth must be protected with thick wool. Otherwise serious frostbites would ensue. Retarded plants may be kept in check for eight months or at times as long as a year, and curiously enough they do not seem to be any the worse for the treatment. Indeed, the experience seems to make them grow all the faster when they are allowed to make a start. Some varieties grow at a tremendous rate when they are brought into heat.—Chicago News.

## POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

It doesn't take much to make a fool of any one.

Being busy has kept many a man out of mischief.

When a man does another man a favor, somehow it seems to strengthen his memory.

A great many people do not talk scandal, but they furnish the material, indulge in as little fool talk as possible. People are quick to pick up your foolish sayings and repeat them behind your back.

Investigate and you will find that jealousy sends more people to insane asylums than any other thing. It will even do up drink in making a record.

Thank heaven, the multiplication table doesn't change! It is the only thing a mother knows that is the same as when she went to school and which she can speak of without being corrected.—Atchison Globe.

## Intermarriage and Cancer.

So little is really known of the mysteries of cancer that the merest scraps of information with regard to it ought not to be neglected. At the village of Clovelly, on the north Devon coast, a very large percentage of deaths is due to cancer, and the reason locally given is the habit of intermarriage necessarily brought about in a place so widely severed from the outside world. The state of affairs appears to be even worse at Buck Mills, a fishing hamlet three miles away, where intermarriage has been carried to such an extreme that one surname is almost sufficient to designate the whole of the population of the village.—London Telegraph.

## An Uncertain Offspring.

A Georgia man wrote the following on an oak slab which marks a supposed grave in a meadow: "This spot is sacred to the memory of a faithful animal, a white mule, born ten years before the civil war and went through that war on a rush from Bull Run to Lee's surrender. We ain't certain that the mule died here, but when last seen the faithful critter was grazing on this ideal spot and trying to kick a lightning flash back to the clouds."—Atlanta Constitution.

## And Then He Ran.

"Did any man ever tell you," asked Mr. Henpeck as he edged toward the door, "that you were the sweetest and most beautiful woman in the world?"

"No," replied his wife.

"Good! Men are honesters than I thought they were."—Chicago Record-Herald.

## Brown Study.

"How do you intend to have the study decorated, Mrs. Goldrocks?"

"I think I'll have it decorated in deep brown," replied Mrs. Goldrocks. "My husband always likes to sit in a deep brown study."—Milwaukee Sentinel.

## He Agreed With Her.

"After all," remarked Mrs. Insulin, "home is the dearest spot on earth."

"It is," answered her husband, who was engaged in auditing the month's bills.—Chicago News.

The Way the Sleek Brute Impressed an Excited Frenchman.

Tigers are impressive creatures, especially when one meets them in the forest. George Maxwell writes of them: "There is little doubt that almost every one has a peculiar sensation of the almost godlike beauty, power, activity and strength of a tiger. A tiger will overawe and make conscious of his inferiority a man who would be unaffected by the bulk of an elephant. The feeling is, however, elusive of description, and I can perhaps best explain it in the words of a most charming French gentleman who was once manager of a great tin mining company in Perak. We had just finished lunch when he entered in a state of tremendous excitement. Walking alone and unarmed, along an unfrequented bridge path through the forest, he had walked almost on to a tiger.

"He gave us a most vivid narrative of the encounter—how the tiger had been lying down concealed in some long lalang grass beside the path; how he was within ten yards of it before he saw it; how then it rose and looked at him; how it yawned at him; how it then walked slowly across the path in front of him and then stopped and looked at him, again yawning, and how it then deliberately walked away into the forest, whose depths finally hid it from view.

"Some one asked the Frenchman whether it was a big tiger. He answered: 'Well, messieurs, I cannot say if he is a big tiger. My eyes see that he is big, but I cannot say how big I see him to be, and if I say how big it is perhaps that I tell you a lie. But I can tell you, messieurs, how big I feel him to be, and I can tell you the truth. When he is standing there in front of me I tell you that I feel he is not less than thirty feet high.'—Exchange.

## THE GROWTH OF TROUT.

Age, Food and Temperature Seem to Have No Bearing on Size.

The Salvelinus fontinalis, which is currently but inaccurately called brook trout, was supposed for many years to be a small fish. Agassiz was largely instrumental in exploding this fallacy. It is not an uncommon thing for an angler with ordinary luck to get a six or seven pound trout of this variety. It is known that a trout may grow to weigh eleven or twelve pounds. There is, however, great difficulty in accounting for its variation in size.

In northeastern Canada there are large streams and lakes in which only shagwings have ever been found. In the immediate vicinity of such water three and four pound trout are quite common, and seven and eight pounders are not phenomenal. In all these waters crustacea do not abound; there are no small fish of any kind except small trout. All the fish are pure fly feeders. At some places, it is true, frogs abound, but, taken as a whole, the difference in food supply is not an adequate explanation for the difference in growth.

There is no substantial difference in the waters as to temperature, size, origin and country. Climatic conditions are the same. The small trout taken to virgin lakes in which there are no fish have sometimes grown to a great size, have sometimes remained small and sometimes have not thrived. The anglers who haunt these waters have not yet found a satisfactory explanation of this peculiar condition of things. It is one of the mysteries which lend fascination to the art. "You never can tell what is going to happen when you go fishing."—St. Paul Dispatch.

## Country Libraries.

The usefulness of urban libraries has been proved up to the hilt, but the question arises why similar advantages cannot be supplied in rural districts. As a matter of fact, they are more needed in the country than in the towns. The dullness of country life is constantly bewailed, and it can be readily believed that a young agricultural laborer or a young woman brought up in the country would be glad to have the chance of the wide choice of books which their cousins in town enjoy.—Bristol Press.

## A New York Jeweler.

There had been a difference of opinion as to whether the bill had been paid. It resulted in favor of the customer, and the collector from the jewelry establishment on Fifth Avenue called to apologize. "Perhaps you will be willing to pardon the mistake," he said, "if you knew how many accounts we have on our books. There are 30,000 of them, and we are sometimes likely therefore to make a mistake."—New York Sun.

## Too Big a Monthful.

Office Boy—What name, please? Foreign Visitor—Herr Schwartzelburghausenmastergeschachtsomongosman teufel. Office Boy—You'll have to call again, sir. The office closes in five minutes, and I shan't have time to pronounce your name before the boss is gone.—Bon Vivant.

## A Broad Distinction.

"Perhaps," said the clerk, "you'd like to look at goods a little more expensive than these." "Not necessarily," replied the shopper, "but I would like to look at some of better quality."—Philadelphia Press.

## Halfback.

Simpkins—When is your son coming home from college? Tompkins—In about six months, I guess. He has been gone six months, and he writes that he is halfback now.—Judge.

The more a man follows nature and is obedient to her laws, the longer he will live; the farther he deviates from these the shorter will be his existence.

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